

JANUARY 25, 1978

HUNGARIANS IN ROMANIA

ANNCR:

A ONE TIME HIGH OFFICIAL IN THE ROMANIAN COMMUNIST PARTY HAS ACCUSED THE COUNTRY'S LEADERSHIP IN A LETTER OF SYSTEMATIC SUPPRESSION OF THE HUNGARIAN MINORITY IN ROMANIA. THE LETTER WRITTEN BY KAROLY KIRALY TWO MONTHS AGO HAS JUST BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO WESTERN NEWSMEN. FROM VIENNA, RON PEMSTEIN HAS A BACKGROUND REPORT ON THE HUNGARIANS IN ROMANIA.

VOICE:

NEARLY TWO MILLION ETHNIC HUNGARIANS LIVE IN TRANSYLVANIA, THE NORTHWESTERN PART OF ROMANIA. THIS IS A TERRITORY TAKEN AWAY FROM HUNGARY AFTER WORLD WAR ONE, THEN GIVEN BACK TO BUDAPEST BY HITLER DURING WORLD WAR TWO. AFTER THE WAR, THE SOVIET UNION, WITH THE LATER AGREEMENT OF THE WESTERN ALLIES, RETURNED TRANSYLVANIA TO ROMANIAN CONTROL. THIS MODERN THROW OF THE GEOGRAPHIC DICE HAS WORKED AGAINST THE HUNGARIAN MINORITY. THE AUTONOMOUS HUNGARIAN REGION WITHIN ROMANIA, ESTABLISHED BY THE 1952 CONSTITUTION, WAS ABOLISHED IN 1968. THE HUNGARIAN BOLYAI UNIVERSITY IN CLUJ WAS COMBINED IN 1959 WITH THE ROMANIAN UNIVERSITY.

IN HIS LETTER TO THE ROMANIAN PARTY LEADERSHIP, FORMER CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER KAROLY KIRALY SAYS THE SUPPRESSION OF MINORITIES IS SYSTEMATIC. AND MISTER KIRALY -- AN ETHNIC HUNGARIAN -- SAYS ROMANIAN STATE AND PARTY OFFICIALS PUT A WIDE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE WHEN IT COMES TO DEALING WITH MINORITIES.

HE GIVES TWO EXAMPLES. ONE IS IN EDUCATION WHERE HE SAYS HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN TECHNICAL AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IS DECLINING DESPITE PROMISES OF IMPROVEMENT. ALSO IN

TRANSYLVANIAN TOWNS WHERE HUNGARIANS COMPRISE THE MAJORITY, MISTER KIRALY SAYS IMPORTANT JOBS ARE GIVEN TO ROMANIANS WHO SPEAK NO HUNGARIAN.

MISTER KIRALY'S FRIENDS MADE THE LETTER PUBLIC BECAUSE HE IS FACING DISCIPLINARY ACTION BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY. HE SAYS HE IS A DEDICATED MARXIST BUT CONTENDS, "A NATION WHICH SUPPRESSES SOME CANNOT BE FREE."

OTHER ETHNIC HUNGARIANS HAVE COMPLAINED THAT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THEM IN ROMANIA IS NOT ALWAYS DIRECT. A TRANSYLVANIA INTELLECTUAL, USING THE ALIAS GYORGY LAZAR, DESCRIBED HOW AUTHORITIES LITERALLY INTERPRET THE LAW CALLING FOR A FAIR ETHNIC BALANCE IN EMPLOYMENT.

EVEN IN TOWNS WHERE HUNGARIANS HAVE A MAJORITY, HE SAYS, THE LAW IS INTERPRETED TO MEAN ONLY TEN PER CENT OF THE JOBS CAN BE GIVEN TO HUNGARIANS SINCE HUNGARIANS COMPRISE TEN PER CENT OF THE LABOR FORCE FOR ALL OF ROMANIA. IN OTHER AREAS OF ROMANIA, WHERE HUNGARIANS HAVE NEVER LIVED, TEN PERCENT OF THE JOBS GO UNFILLED. MEANWHILE, THE INTELLECTUAL SAYS, ROMANIANS ARE TRUCKED INTO TRANSYLVANIA TO TAKE NEW JOBS CREATED BY RAPID INDUSTRIALIZATION.

THERE IS GROWING EVIDENCE THAT HUNGARY -- LONG RESTRAINED BY MOSCOW IN MAKING PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AGAINST ITS WARSAW PACT ALLY -- IS LOSING PATIENCE. THE BUDAPEST NEWSPAPER MAGYAR NEMZET CONTENDS THE ISSUE IS GROWING FROM A EUROPEAN PROBLEM TO A WORLD PROBLEM.

LAST SEPTEMBER, THE ORGAN OF THE PATRIOTIC PEOPLE'S FRONT, A COMMUNIST POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, SAID, "WE FEAR FOR THE HUNGARIAN-SPEAKERS LIVING UNDER FOREIGN HOST NATIONS BECAUSE THEY

ARE FACING THE THREAT OF ASSIMILATION." THE HUNGARIAN MAGAZINE CONTINUED, "IT IS THE DUTY OF THE MOTHER-NATION TO GUARD OVER SPEAKERS OF THE HUNGARIAN MOTHER TONGUE NO MATTER WHERE THEY ARE LIVING."

ROMANIAN PRESIDENT NICOLAE CEAUSESCU AND HUNGARIAN PARTY LEADER JANOS KADAR DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM LAST JUNE AT A MEETING ON THE BORDER. A NUMBER OF CONCESSIONS WERE MADE BY ROMANIA AT THAT TIME, NOTABLY ALLOWING A HUNGARIAN CONSULATE TO OPEN IN THE TRANSYLVANIA CAPITAL OF CLUJ. TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATIONS ACROSS THE BORDER ARE SUPPOSED TO BE EASED. THE AGREEMENT WAS HEAVILY PUBLICIZED IN HUNGARY, WHILE THE ROMANIAN MEDIA GAVE NO DETAILS ABOUT THE AGREEMENTS.

THE HUNGARIAN COMPLAINTS ARE COINCIDING WITH THE MASS EMIGRATION TO GERMANY OF ETHNIC GERMANS FROM OLD SAXON TOWNS NEIGHBORING TRANSYLVANIA. THE GERMANS -- THE SECOND LARGEST MINORITY AFTER THE HUNGARIANS -- HAD LIVED IN THE AREA FOR EIGHT HUNDRED YEARS. BUT ALL SIDES AGREE THAT HUNGARY CANNOT ABSORB LARGE NUMBERS OF HUNGARIAN SPEAKERS FROM ROMANIA.

GH/PBM